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Turnover analysis of pharmacy ancillary personnel

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TURNOVER ANALYSIS OF PHARMACY ANCILLARY PERSONNEL

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By

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ABSTRACT

TURNOVER ANALYSIS OF PHARMACY ANCILLARY PERSONNEL

by Hariclia C. Steiber

The purpose of this study was to identify the reasons that contribute to pharmacy ancillary personnel (clerks) turnover, and the factors that could prevent it. Questionnaires asked former clerks and managers to rate nine turnover reasons and twelve prevention factors in terms of their importance.

It was hypothesized that pay dissatisfaction, stressful working conditions and limited opportunity for advancement would be rated as the most important turnover reasons, and that higher wages, reduced job stress and more promotional opportunities would be identified as the most important turnover prevention factors by pharmacy clerks. These hypotheses were supported. It was also hypothesized that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the turnover reasons and the prevention factors than pharmacy clerks. This hypothesis was partially supported, although there was considerable agreement about the most important reasons for turnover. The results of this study are discussed in terms of their implications for management.

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Turnover Analysis of Pharmacy Ancillary Personnel

Employee turnover has been a heavily researched topic. There have been hundreds of studies which have addressed the variables that affect employee turnover. Cotton and Tuttle's (1986) meta-analysis of studies on employee turnover lists over 26 variables which have been reliably associated with turnover. Factors such as pay, job performance, role clarity, overall job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are classified into the work-related category of turnover correlates. Employment perceptions, unemployment rate, accession rate, and union presence fall under the external correlates category. The personal correlates category includes variables such as age, tenure, gender, education, and marital status.

There is no question that each of these variables has had an effect on employee turnover at one point or another. There are probably few other variables that have not yet been included in any of the hundreds of studies investigating employee turnover. None of these studies, however, was conducted in a retail pharmacy setting or addressed pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover. Review of research relevant to this study necessarily draws upon existing research conducted in other retail and non-retail settings.

This study examined the relationship between work-related variables and turnover in a retail pharmacy

setting, in terms of possible reasons contributing to employee turnover and possible ways to reduce turnover. External and personal turnover correlates were not included, because a company has no direct control over external variables such as economic conditions or unemployment rates, or personal factors of turnover such as age, tenure, or gender. An employer does, however, have significant control over work-related factors, and can take direct action to counteract the dissatisfaction an employee is experiencing.

A work-related variable, job satisfaction, has been one of the most studied antecedents of turnover, although it accounts for less than 20 percent of the statistical variance in turnover (Abelson, 1987; Sager, Futrell & Varadarajan, 1989). Some specific facets of job satisfaction are pay, work, promotion, supervision and co-worker satisfaction (Blau, 1987).

Cotton and Tuttle's (1986) meta-analytic study demonstrated that a negative relationship exists between satisfaction and turnover. Several other studies, not included in Cotton and Tuttle's meta-analysis, have also indicated that job satisfaction is inversely related to turnover (Abelson, 1987; Carsten & Spector, 1987; Darden, Hampton & Boatwright, 1987; Donnelly & Etzel, 1977; Fern, Avila & Grewal, 1989; Sager et al., 1989). In other words, the more satisfied an employee is with his or her

job overall, the less likely he or she is to quit.

In Cotton and Tuttle's meta-analytic study (1986), pay satisfaction was found to be stably, reliably, and inversely correlated with turnover. Satisfaction with promotional opportunities was found to be moderately inversely correlated with turnover.

Job stress, another variable one would expect to be related to job satisfaction, has been neglected by researchers. Cotton and Tuttle (1986) did not include job stress in their meta-analysis, because only two studies on turnover had previously addressed it. However, there are a few studies which have addressed job stress, and they indicate that increased levels of stress result in decreased job satisfaction which in turn leads to non-productive behavior such as turnover (Donnelly & Etzel, 1977; Keller, 1984).

Today, as the pharmacy business is rapidly changing and the prescription volume in pharmacies increases, the role of pharmacy ancillary personnel becomes very critical to the success of the operation. Ancillary personnel can be utilized to perform clerical, technical, or nonjudgmental tasks such as typing, answering phones, and ringing-up merchandise in order to enhance the monitoring and consultative capabilities of pharmacists, and to facilitate clinical pharmacy practice in the retail pharmacy setting.

Although currently there is no separate job classification for pharmacy ancillary personnel at Drug Chain A, for the purpose of this study they are treated as a separate group of employees. Pharmacy ancillary personnel need to develop a different set of skills and abilities than Drug Chain A's non-pharmacy clerks. The handling of prescriptions requires a high level of accuracy and familiarity with pharmacy procedures, insurance requirements and drug names. Additionally, pharmacy ancillary personnel have to demonstrate a high level of maturity, sensitivity, discretion and professionalism when dealing with customers who have health problems.

The requirements for one to be hired into a pharmacy ancillary position are a high school education or equivalent, math ability, writing skills, ability to learn the use of pharmacy computer applications and cash register procedures, and willingness to work flexible hours. Once placed in the retail pharmacy setting, pharmacy ancillary personnel are typically trained by a pharmacist. They are taught specialized customer service and telephone skills, such as answering questions regarding a customer's prescription or insurance eligibility, and ensuring that a completed prescription is received by the proper patient.

Computer skills are among the skills that pharmacy

ancillary personnel are to acquire while in training. They have to learn how to accurately input prescription information in the computer, how to locate a customer's prescription, and how to obtain relevant information in the system, for example, the price of a drug or availability of a generic.

Pharmacy ancillary personnel also become familiar, while in training, with generic drug names, third party billing, handling refills, and performing general buying functions. All these skills are specific to retail pharmacy operations and can be learned only in the retail pharmacy setting through on-the-job training.

The job of pharmacy ancillary personnel, unlike that of retail store clerks, is very unique. Pharmacy ancillary personnel interact with a different set of customers than the rest of the store clerks. They often deal with patients who have some health problem and therefore are not always easy customers to please. Pharmacy ancillary personnel also have to work in a very restricted and small (typically 34 x 10 feet) area. The pharmacy area has to be restricted because of the stored pharmaceuticals, and is almost never well ventilated because of security considerations.

Pharmacy ancillary personnel's role also differs from that of pharmacists. Pharmacy ancillary personnel do not have the educational background or level of training that

pharmacists do. A very large percentage of pharmacy ancillary personnel are either completing their high school education or have recently graduated from high school. The role of pharmacy ancillary personnel is to support pharmacists by performing clerical and non-technical tasks. Although pharmacy ancillary personnel have to demonstrate maturity and professionalism and are often asked to assume a high level of responsibility, they have neither a prestigious title nor are they viewed as professionals.

Drug stores want to assure not only that they can attract and retain competent pharmacy ancillary personnel. Employee turnover is an especially relevant problem in retailing (Good, Sisler & Gentry, 1988).

One major drug chain, here called Drug Chain A, in an attempt to quantify pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover, conducted a simple study. A survey was sent out to managers of Drug Chain A in June 1989. The pharmacy managers were asked to indicate whether their pharmacy department had experienced any ancillary personnel turnover during the last 18 months, and to give the exact number of employees who had either transferred to another department other than pharmacy, or left Drug Chain A.

In reviewing data from 240 pharmacies chainwide, turnover of pharmacy ancillary personnel was considered a problem at Drug Chain A. The chainwide average turnover

for the period of 18 months was 60%, which translates into a 40% turnover rate in a one year period. This turnover rate included both voluntary and involuntary turnover.

Pharmacy managers were asked to identify factors they thought had contributed to ancillary personnel turnover. They were also asked to communicate their suggestions as to what could be used as an incentive to retain pharmacy ancillary personnel. The results of the survey indicated that pharmacy managers most frequently identified low compensation as the primary determinant of turnover. The second most frequently mentioned factor was job stress, followed by career change.

Incentives that managers considered could be utilized to retain pharmacy ancillary personnel were, in order of importance, better compensation, reduced stress, and more advancement opportunities. Compensation was the highest rated incentive option.

Although that study has certain implications for theory concerning turnover in the retail pharmacy setting, it has a major limitation. The results of the analysis may be biased, because the data collected reflect only the opinions of managers and not those of pharmacy ancillary personnel. There was a clear need for another study that included pharmacy ancillary personnel in its sample to support previous findings and to reveal new issues in the area of pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover.

Drawing upon the research already mentioned and the results of the survey that was distributed to pharmacy managers at Drug Chain A, it seems that, in the retail pharmacy setting, job satisfaction is considered to be the most important variable related to turnover.

Hypothesis 1 asserted that job stress, dissatisfaction with pay, and limited promotional opportunities would be listed as the most important factors that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel have contributed to their giving up their jobs.

A secondary issue investigated was how an employee's job level may influence his or her perspective on turnover. Cotton and Tuttle (1986) argue that a regression analysis they performed in their meta-analysis showed that non-managerial employees view pay and satisfaction with work as less important than managerial employees do. Woods and Macaulay (1989) suggest that managers generally have misconceptions about what their employees want. Hypothesis 2 asserted that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors contributing to turnover than pharmacy ancillary personnel would.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 above pertain to the reasons causing employees to leave their jobs. Hypotheses 3 and 4 pertain to turnover prevention. Although the purpose of this study was not to develop specific strategies to

reduce turnover, it was important to look at employees' opinions on how to prevent turnover. It is implied that prevention techniques are completely dependent upon the reasons contributing to turnover. In other words, an organization has to identify the factors contributing to its employees' turnover before it can begin developing intervention programs to reduce turnover. For example, if low pay is one of the factors identified as a turnover determinant, it is assumed that higher pay will eliminate pay dissatisfaction and therefore reduce turnover.

Hypothesis 3 asserted that reduced job stress, higher/competitive pay, and more opportunities for advancement would be listed as the most important factors that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel may have prevented their voluntary terminations.

Hypothesis 4 asserted that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors that may have prevented employee turnover than pharmacy ancillary personnel.

Method

Subjects

All pharmacy ancillary personnel who had voluntarily left Drug Chain A within a recent period of one year, and their respective managers were asked to participate in this study.

Twenty two managers responded to the questionnaire.

There was an average of 4.05 pharmacy ancillary people per manager (ranging from one to eight per manager). The total number of manager questionnaires received was 89. The response rate was 78.6%.

Forty five usable ancillary personnel questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 40.9%. One cause of the low response rate from this group was that many pharmacy ancillary personnel had moved and no forwarding address was available.

Materials

Two versions of the same questionnaire were developed in order to address the turnover issue at Drug Chain A, one administered to pharmacy managers (Appendix A) and one administered to pharmacy ancillary personnel (Appendix B). The questionnaire distributed to pharmacy managers sought to determine: (a) managers' opinions of the reason(s) for their employees' voluntary termination (e.g., job stress, job dissatisfaction, limited opportunities for advancement); (b) ways termination could have been prevented (e.g., training, reduced job stress, better advancement opportunities); and (c) suggestions on how to attract and to retain competent pharmacy ancillary personnel.

The questionnaire distributed to pharmacy ancillary personnel addressed the same issues as the questionnaire for the pharmacy managers. In addition, it asked the

pharmacy ancillary personnel to indicate if they felt that their manager was aware of their reasons for leaving.

Ratings of reasons for leaving and methods of prevention were made on 5-point Likert type scales, where 1 = not at all important, 3 = somewhat important, and 5 = very important. Suggestions by pharmacy ancillary personnel and managers for attracting and retaining pharmacy ancillary personnel were open-ended.

Procedure

Exit interviews were utilized to gather the names and addresses of all pharmacy ancillary personnel who had left Drug Chain A during calendar year 1989. The names of their respective managers were also identified by store number.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Questionnaires were sent directly to pharmacy managers and pharmacy ancillary personnel with a cover letter explaining that the questionnaire was anonymous and that the participants' responses would be treated confidentially by the researcher.

The names of the participants did not appear on the returned questionnaires. The questionnaires were kept in a locked file cabinet in Drug Chain A's Personnel Department. The researcher and the Employee Relations Manager of Drug Chain A were the only individuals who had access to the questionnaires.

Results

Reasons for turnover

The mean ratings for each of the reasons that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel have contributed to their turnover were calculated (see Table 1). In addition, the mean ratings for all the reasons that pharmacy managers think have contributed to pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover were calculated (see Table 1).

The turnover reasons are presented in rank order by their mean value in Table 2. The two turnover reasons listed as the most important by pharmacy ancillary personnel were low/non-competitive wages, and limited opportunity for career advancement. Lack of organizational commitment, and poor performance were the two turnover reasons that pharmacy ancillary personnel reported as least important.

Hypothesis 1, that pharmacy ancillary personnel would rate job stress, pay dissatisfaction, and limited promotional opportunities as the most important reasons contributing to their turnover, was tested in two steps. First, a one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the nine reasons rated by pharmacy ancillary personnel differed significantly in perceived importance. This analysis produced a significant result ($F(8, 37) = 14.26$, $p < .001$)

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests, Reasons That Have Contributed to Pharmacy Ancillary Personnel (Clerks) Turnover for Clerks and Managers

Reasons	Clerks n=45 Mean (s.d.)	Managers n=89 Mean (s.d.)	Total N=134 Mean (s.d.)	t-value (df=132)
Poor performance	1.47 (.99)	2.02 (1.37)	1.84 (1.28)	2.43*
Lack of role clarity	1.87 (1.25)	1.40 (.77)	1.56 (.98)	2.64*
Task repetitiveness	1.80 (1.24)	1.82 (1.15)	1.81 (1.18)	0.09
Low/non-competitive wages	3.31 (1.68)	2.96 (1.60)	3.08 (1.63)	1.20
Dissatisfaction with co-workers	1.93 (1.39)	1.84 (1.21)	1.87 (1.27)	0.39
Dissatisfaction with supervisor	2.36 (1.69)	1.81 (1.15)	1.99 (1.37)	2.21*
Limited opportunity for career advancement	2.89 (1.72)	2.40 (1.53)	2.57 (1.61)	1.66
Lack of organizational commitment	1.58 (1.14)	1.75 (1.13)	1.69 (1.13)	0.84
Stressful working conditions	2.84 (1.68)	2.70 (1.54)	2.75 (1.58)	0.51

Note. Each reason was rated on a 5-point scale, from not at all important (=1) to very important (=5)

* $p < .05$

Table 2

Reasons for Turnover in Rank Order of Importance for Pharmacy Ancillary Personnel

Reasons	Clerks Mean (s.d.)	Rank by Clerks	Managers Mean (s.d.)	Rank by Managers
Low/non-competitive wages	3.31 (1.68)	1	2.96 (1.60)	1
Limited opportunity for career advancement	2.89 (1.72)	2	2.40 (1.53)	3
Stressful working conditions	2.84 (1.68)	3	2.70 (1.58)	2
Dissatisfaction with supervisor	2.36* (1.69)	4	1.81 (1.15)	7
Dissatisfaction with co-workers	1.93* (1.39)	5	1.84 (1.21)	5
Lack of role clarity	1.87* (1.25)	6	1.40 (.77)	9
Task repetitiveness	1.80* (1.24)	7	1.82 (1.15)	6
Lack of organizational commitment	1.58* (1.14)	8	1.75 (1.13)	8
Poor performance	1.47 (.99)	9	2.02 (1.37)	4

Note. * indicates that turnover reason is significantly different ($p < .05$) in importance than the reason directly below it.

which indicates that pharmacy ancillary personnel do indeed perceive significant differences among possible reasons for their turnover.

The ANOVA was followed by individual pairwise comparisons between the different reasons contributing to turnover to determine the relative importance of each reason. Rather than make all possible comparisons, each of the nine turnover reasons was compared with the next most important one. Significant differences between the nine turnover reasons first appear with those of average importance (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 2, that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors contributing to turnover than pharmacy ancillary would, was tested in two steps. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the overall sets of responses of pharmacy managers and of pharmacy ancillary personnel to the nine turnover reasons. The result of the MANOVA was significant ($F(9, 124) = 3.70$, $p < .001$), indicating that there was a significant difference between the patterns of responses of the two groups.

Since the result of the MANOVA was significant, individual t-tests were performed for each of the reasons that pharmacy managers and ancillary personnel felt may have contributed to turnover. Table 1 reports the results

of the t-tests comparing pharmacy managers' and pharmacy ancillary personnel's responses on each of the turnover reasons.

Statistically significant differences were reported for three turnover reasons (poor performance, lack of role clarity, and dissatisfaction with supervisor). Managers reported relatively higher ratings than pharmacy ancillary personnel on poor performance, and relatively lower ratings on lack of role clarity and dissatisfaction with supervisor.

Despite the differences observed between pharmacy ancillary personnel and pharmacy managers, it is worth noting that the rank orders of reasons are similar for the two groups. A Spearman rank order correlation does not quite reach significance, however (rho = .62, $p < .10$, two-tailed).

Turnover prevention

The means for each of the factors that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel may have prevented their leaving were calculated (see Table 3). In addition, the means for all the factors that pharmacy managers think may have prevented pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover were calculated (see Table 3).

Table 4 lists the factors that may have prevented pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover in rank order by their mean value. The two prevention factors listed as

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-tests, Factors That May Have Prevented Ancillary Personnel (Clerks) Turnover for Clerks and Managers

Factors	Clerks n=45 Mean (s.d.)	Managers n=89 Mean (s.d.)	Total N=134 Mean (s.d.)	t-value (df=132)
Greater role clarity	1.82 (1.25)	1.48 (.96)	1.60 (1.07)	1.75
More challenging job assignments	2.27 (1.51)	1.98 (1.38)	2.08 (1.43)	1.11
Higher/competitive wages	3.67 (1.67)	3.20 (1.71)	3.36 (1.70)	1.50
Better rapport with co-workers	1.91 (1.29)	1.71 (1.11)	1.78 (1.17)	0.95
Better rapport with supervisor	2.51 (1.73)	1.82 (1.22)	2.05 (1.44)	2.68**
More opportunity for career advancement	2.98 (1.66)	2.42 (1.55)	2.61 (1.60)	1.90*
Reduced job stress	2.87 (1.67)	2.69 (1.64)	2.75 (1.65)	0.60
Training programs	2.18 (1.51)	1.90 (1.36)	1.99 (1.41)	1.08
Flexible hours	2.44 (1.65)	2.33 (1.54)	2.37 (1.57)	0.41
Job sharing	1.71 (1.34)	1.43 (.95)	1.52 (1.10)	1.42
Bonus incentives	2.84 (1.80)	2.37 (1.53)	2.53 (1.64)	1.59
Child care programs	2.04 (1.68)	1.55 (1.25)	1.72 (1.42)	1.92*

* $p < .06$. ** $p < .05$

Table 4

Factors That May Have Prevented Turnover in Rank Order of Importance for Pharmacy Ancillary Personnel

Factors	Clerks Mean (s.d.)	Rank by Clerks	Managers Mean (s.d.)	Rank by Managers
Higher/competitive wages	3.67* (1.67)	1	3.20 (1.71)	1
More opportunity for career advancement	2.98* (1.66)	2	2.42 (1.55)	3
Reduced job stress	2.87 (1.67)	3	2.69 (1.64)	2
Bonus incentives	2.84 (1.80)	4	2.37 (1.53)	4
Better rapport with supervisor	2.51 (1.73)	5	1.82 (1.22)	8
Flexible hours	2.44 (1.65)	6	2.33 (1.54)	5
More challenging job assignments	2.27 (1.51)	7	1.98 (1.38)	6
Training programs	2.18 (1.51)	8	1.90 (1.36)	7
Child care programs	2.04* (1.68)	9	1.55 (1.25)	10
Better rapport with co-workers	1.91* (1.29)	10	1.71 (1.11)	9
Greater role clarity	1.82* (1.25)	11	1.48 (.96)	11
Job sharing	1.71 (1.34)	12	1.43 (.95)	12

Note. * indicates that prevention factor is significantly different ($p < .05$) in importance than the factor directly below it.

the most important by pharmacy ancillary personnel were higher/competitive wages and more opportunity for career advancement. Greater role clarity and job sharing were the two prevention factors that pharmacy ancillary personnel reported as the least important ones. It should be noted that there was great similarity between the turnover reasons and the prevention factors identified as the most important ones by pharmacy ancillary personnel.

Hypothesis 3, that pharmacy ancillary personnel would rate reduced job stress, higher/competitive wages, and more opportunities for advancement as the most important turnover prevention factors, was tested in two steps. First, a one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the twelve factors listed by pharmacy ancillary personnel differed significantly overall in importance. The ANOVA produced a significant result ($F(11, 78) = 18.8$, $p < .001$) which indicates that the factors pharmacy ancillary personnel feel may have prevented their turnover did differ significantly in importance.

The ANOVA was followed by individual pairwise comparisons between the different factors that may have prevented turnover to determine the relative importance of each factor. Once again, rather than make all possible comparisons, each of the twelve prevention factors was compared with the next most important one. The first two

turnover prevention factors were clearly the most important ones (see Table 4).

Hypothesis 4, that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors that may have prevented employee turnover than pharmacy ancillary personnel, was tested in two steps. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the overall responses of pharmacy managers and those of pharmacy ancillary personnel to the twelve prevention factors. The result of the MANOVA was not significant ($F(12, 121) = 1.37$, $p > .05$) indicating that there is no reason to believe that there is significant difference between the patterns of responses of the two groups. Moreover, the Spearman correlation between the two sets of ranks showed that there was close similarity between the two sets (rho = .95, $p < .01$, two-tailed).

Although the result of the MANOVA was not significant, individual t-tests were performed on each of the factors that pharmacy managers and ancillary personnel feel may have prevented ancillary personnel turnover. The results from t tests are presented in Table 3. Statistically significant differences were reported on one prevention factor (better rapport with supervisor), while differences on two other factors (more opportunity for career advancement, and child care programs) were

borderline statistically significant. A larger sample size might very well have revealed more significant differences in a few reasons. Pharmacy ancillary personnel reported higher means than managers on every prevention factor (see Table 3).

Other turnover issues

The mean responses were calculated on Question 4 which asked pharmacy ancillary personnel to determine what they felt their managers' level of awareness was of the reasons they had left the organization. The mean was 4.16 of a possible 5.0 (s.d. = 1.19) which indicates that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel that their managers were quite aware of the reasons that have contributed to their turnover.

Although some significant differences in absolute ratings were observed, and managers generally gave lower mean importance ratings, the Spearman correlations showed that managers understand to some degree the relative importance of different reasons for turnover and possible preventive measures as viewed by pharmacy ancillary personnel.

Discussion

In broad terms, the results of these analyses provide support for the study's four hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 asserted that high levels of job stress, pay dissatisfaction, and limited promotional opportunities

would be listed as the most important reasons that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel have contributed to their turnover. Pharmacy ancillary personnel rated low/non-competitive wages as the number one turnover reason (M = 3.31), with limited opportunity for career advancement ranking second (M = 2.89), and stressful working conditions following third (M = 2.84). However, the difference in relative importance between these three reasons is not significant as the individual pairwise comparisons indicate.

Another turnover reason, dissatisfaction with supervisor, also came into play, with a mean of 2.36. The remaining five turnover reasons reported mean scores of 1.93 or less and are considered to be of below average or low importance.

Hypothesis 2 stated that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors contributing to turnover than pharmacy ancillary personnel would. The results of the MANOVA showed a significant difference between the overall responses of managers and those of ancillary personnel to the nine turnover reasons. The results from the t tests more specifically identified three turnover reasons (poor performance, lack of role clarity, and dissatisfaction with supervisor) as the ones with statistically significant differences.

Managers rated poor performance higher in importance

as a reason for turnover, whereas pharmacy ancillary personnel rated lack of role clarity, and dissatisfaction with supervisor higher in importance than managers did. It should be noted, however, that these were turnover reasons of less importance to both groups (managers and clerks), whereas there was agreement between the two groups on the turnover reasons of most importance.

The results of this study also supported Hypothesis 3 which stated that reduced job stress, higher/competitive wages, and more opportunity for career advancement would be listed as the most important factors that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel might have prevented their turnover.

Higher/competitive wages was the number one prevention factor (M = 3.67) listed by pharmacy ancillary personnel, followed by more opportunity for career advancement (M = 2.98), and reduced job stress coming third (M = 2.87). There was clearly a significant difference in relative importance among these three factors as the individual pairwise comparisons indicate.

Other prevention factors that obtained a mean of 2.5 or higher were bonus incentives (M = 2.84), and better rapport with supervisor (M = 2.51). The seven other prevention factors obtained mean scores lower than 2.44 and are considered to be of average or low importance in the prevention of pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover.

The MANOVA results did not seem to support Hypothesis 4, which stated that managers would attribute different levels of importance to the factors that could have prevented employee turnover than pharmacy ancillary personnel would. However, the results from the t tests assisted in identifying statistically significant differences on one prevention factor (better rapport with supervisor) and borderline statistically significant differences on two other factors (more opportunity for career advancement, and child care programs).

The findings reviewed here have certain implications for retail pharmacies and more specifically for Drug Chain A. It is very important for management to be aware of and sensitive to the needs of their employees. In this study, reasons that pharmacy ancillary personnel feel have contributed to their turnover and factors that could have prevented their turnover have been identified and have been ranked in order of importance.

Pharmacy ancillary personnel feel that the low/non-competitive wages that pharmacy work offers them has contributed to their leaving. Limited opportunity for career advancement and stressful working conditions are also important reasons that have contributed to the pharmacy ancillary personnel's overall job dissatisfaction.

Pharmacy ancillary personnel feel that if these

problems had been identified and resolved by management, turnover might have been prevented. In other words, pharmacy ancillary personnel reported that higher pay, more career advancement opportunities, and reduced job stress are the most important factors that could have prevented their turnover.

The goal of this study was not only to identify reasons that have contributed to pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover and factors that could have prevented it, but also to provide suggestions to assist retail pharmacies in reducing turnover in the future. Pharmacies, and drug chains in particular, can recruit and retain pharmacy ancillary personnel by effectively addressing the turnover issues previously discussed.

In terms of more career development opportunities, there are certain limitations to consider. Due to state regulations to protect patients, pharmacy ancillary personnel can only perform certain tasks and cannot assume any of the responsibilities of a pharmacist.

Although career advancement opportunities are very limited in pharmacies, one potential solution would be to create career advancement opportunities within the position of pharmacy ancillary. Based on competency and hours worked within the pharmacy, an ancillary person's status could advance from entry-level, to mid-level, to senior-level. This would require the development of a

competency evaluation test. It would be the responsibility of the ancillary person's supervisor to periodically complete the evaluation.

In terms of higher and more competitive wages, retail pharmacies may consider the following suggestions. Pay could be tied to the competency status that a pharmacy ancillary has achieved. Depending on an ancillary person's competency status (entry-, mid-, or senior-level), he or she would obtain a pay differential.

In addition, depending on geographic location of stores within a drug chain, results of periodic surveys analyzing the competition's pay structure and cost of living factors, could be used to adjust wages of pharmacy ancillary personnel.

The necessity of identifying ways to reduce job stress has also been addressed in this study. Stress is unavoidable in the pharmacy environment due to the nature of the business (fast-paced, sick customers, etc.). However, stress seminars could assist ancillary personnel with learning how not to internalize stress, or how to reduce levels of stress before it becomes dysfunctional. In addition, rotating schedules so that the same ancillary person does not work during the most busy and stressful hours, and allowing ancillary personnel to have frequent and regular breaks could be beneficial.

Although pharmacy managers and ancillary personnel

identified the same three turnover reasons as most important, they perceived the importance of other reasons differently, such as lack of role clarity, dissatisfaction with supervisor, and poor performance. Pharmacy ancillary personnel indicated that they had problems with their supervisors and that their role was not clearly defined. On the other hand, managers tended to feel that ancillary personnel performed poorly, but did not share the clerks' opinions regarding poorly defined roles and dissatisfaction with management. These differences in perception seem rather classic in nature. In the actual employment situation, such differences could comprise a source of misunderstanding and stress, and contribute to failure of communication.

However, when pharmacy ancillary personnel were asked to assess the awareness level of their supervisor regarding their turnover reasons, 80% of them responded that their supervisor was aware of the reasons that led them to leave. These results indicate that pharmacy managers are not fully aware of the importance that ancillary personnel place on the different turnover reasons and that managers themselves believe poor performance to be more important than pharmacy ancillary personnel believe.

Pharmacy clerks, on the other hand, have a misconception regarding their supervisors' level of

awareness, which could in itself lead to additional stress. If one believes one's manager knows why one is dissatisfied, and does nothing about it, that could be more frustrating than believing one's manager does not have a clue. These differences also suggest that pharmacy ancillary personnel do not see poor performance as a possible reason for their leaving.

The implication derived from these findings is that improved communication between management and ancillary personnel may not only reduce differences in perceptions between the two groups (managers and clerks), but may also reduce ancillary personnel turnover.

Pharmacy managers should try to have staff meetings weekly or bi-weekly to encourage an exchange of concerns and ideas. A management training seminar can also help managers acquire the necessary skills to be able to identify potential problems in their department and to generate solutions or improvements. Another solution would be to have a suggestion box for everyone to anonymously share his or her concerns and/or ideas.

The present study has certain limitations. First, the sample was drawn from a single drug chain. Therefore, generalization of these results beyond Drug Chain A may be questionable. Second, the sample size was relatively small (clerks = 45, managers = 89). Nevertheless, the findings of this study do provide valuable insights into

the role of job satisfaction in turnover behavior of pharmacy ancillary personnel.

Future research on pharmacy ancillary personnel turnover should include a larger sample drawn from at least three or four different drug chains. Another suggestion for future research would be to compare pharmacy ancillary personnel who left with those who stayed, which may reveal interesting differences in opinions between the two groups.

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APPENDICES

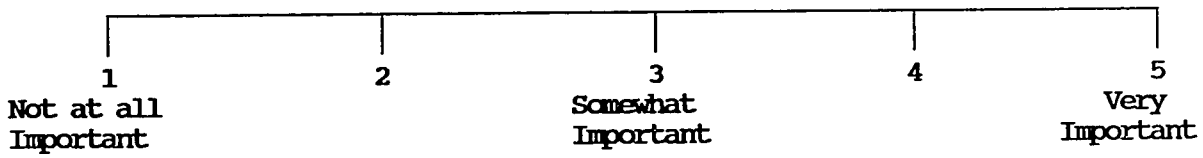
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PHARMACY MANAGERS

_____

NAME OF EMPLOYEE

1. How important do you feel were the following reasons in contributing to this employee's decision to leave Longs? **(Please assign a number from 1 to 5 next to <u>each</u> item)**



____ Poor performance
____ Lack of role clarity
____ Task repetitiveness
____ Low/non-competitive wages
____ Dissatisfaction with co-workers
____ Dissatisfaction with supervision
____ Limited opportunity for advancement
____ Lack of organizational commitment
____ Stressful working conditions
____ Other _____
____ Other _____

2. How important do you feel the following factors would have been in preventing this employee's termination? **(Use the 1 to 5 scale above)**

____ Greater role clarity
____ More challenging/interesting job assignments
____ Higher/competitive wages
____ Better rapport with co-workers
____ Better rapport with supervisor
____ More opportunity for advancement
____ Reduced job stress
____ Training programs
____ Flexible hours
____ Job sharing
____ Bonus incentives
____ Child care program
____ Other _____

3. Do you have any suggestions to offer that you feel could make pharmacies at Longs Drugs a better place to work?

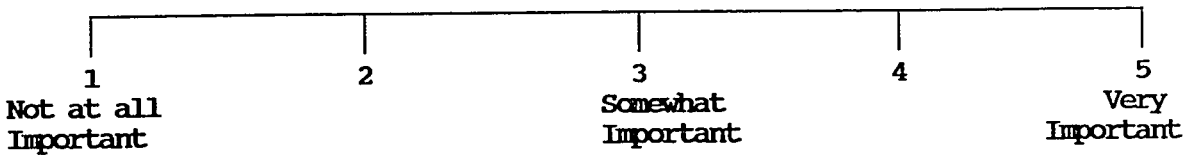
_____

_____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PHARMACY ANCILLARY PERSONNEL

1. How important were the following reasons in contributing to your decision to leave Longs? **(Assign a number from 1 to 5 next to each item)**



____ Poor performance
____ Lack of role clarity (job duties not clearly defined)
____ Task repetitiveness (repeated job tasks)
____ Low/non-competitive pay
____ Dissatisfaction with co-workers
____ Dissatisfaction with supervisor
____ Limited opportunity for career advancement
____ Lack of organizational commitment (lack of loyalty to company, etc.)
____ Stressful working conditions
____ Other _____
____ Other _____

2. How important would the following factors have been in preventing you from quitting? **(Please use the same 1 to 5 scale above)**

____ Greater role clarity (job duties clearly defined)
____ More challenging/interesting job assignments
____ Higher/competitive pay
____ Better rapport with co-workers (getting along with other employees)
____ Better rapport with supervisor (getting along with manager)
____ More opportunity for career advancement
____ Reduced job stress
____ Training programs
____ Flexible hours
____ Job sharing (part-time)
____ Bonus incentives ($)
____ Child care program
____ Other _____

3. Do you have any suggestions to offer that you feel could make pharmacies at Longs a better place to work? **(Please explain)**

_____

_____

4. How aware do you think was your supervisor of the reasons that led to your decision to leave Longs? **(Please circle a number)**